

Family tackles police over woman's arraignment for alleged cop's murder

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The family of one Munirat Makanjuola, a resident of Mogaji Compound, Freeman Street, Lagos Island, has accused the police of unlawfully detaining the 25-year-old woman and charging her with murder and arson involving a man accused of kidnapping.

The man said to be a cop whose identity could not be ascertained was reportedly burnt to death by a mob in the area on December 12, 2020.

City Round learnt that Makanjuola was asleep with her cousins – Deborah, six and five-year-old Khadijat, when a man later identified simply as Aileru sneaked into their apartment and reportedly abducted the two girls.

As he was leaving, Aileru, who was said to be residing in the neighbourhood, reportedly hit his leg on an object which created a noise and awoke Makanjuola.

She reportedly raised the alarm which drew the attention of people partying on the street. They were said to have chased Aileru and caught him.

Aileru when beaten up and probed reportedly identified his alleged accomplice as the policeman, whose identity had yet to be ascertained.

It was gathered that the policeman, who was within the vicinity, was accosted that night by the angry youths and while he was being tortured, he tried to escape. A mob chased after him and tracked him down at Sura area where he was set ablaze.

Makanjuola's stepbrother, Sulaimon Saheed, who spoke to *City Round* on behalf of the family, said she was invited three days after to the Adeniji Adele Police Station to write a statement but was eventually detained.

He said, “My sister lives with my mother at Mogaji Compound, Lagos Island. She was the one taking care of our cousins, Khadijat and Deborah, who also live with our mum. I was not living with them so I didn’t know about the incident until three days after.

“On the day the incident happened, a party was going on outside when the man (Aileru) sneaked into her room around 2am and abducted the two kids. As he was leaving, his leg hit something and my sister woke up. She shouted and he rushed to take cover in an abandoned building close by. He was caught that night and it turned out that he was a known face on Lagos Island. His name is Aileru.

“He mentioned one man as the person who sent him to abduct the children and that they had known each other for some time. The man was also within the vicinity and was picked up that night. While people were beating them, the man tried to escape. They trailed him to Sura and set him on fire. Aileru was eventually freed.

“The police claimed that the suspect was a policeman serving at the Adeniji Adele Police Station.”

Saheed explained on December 15, the police invited Makanjuola to the station to write her statement but on getting there, she was detained.

He said the family confronted the Divisional Police Officer, Adeniji Adele Police Station for detaining her and he told them to produce Aileru before she would be released.

At that time, Aileru’s family was said to have taken him out of Lagos as Makanjuola was consequently transferred to the State Criminal Investigation and Intelligence Department, Pantí, Yaba.

Saheed said, “Aileru was later arrested but we learnt that he had been freed. We met some policemen – one Olusola, Ayo, a female, and their team leader, Musa. They told us it is a case of murder and arson and asked us to give them money so they could change the charge.

Saheed said to the family’s shock, Makanjuola was arraigned at Yaba Magistrates’ Court on December 30.

But the Police Public Relations Officer in the state, CSP Muyiwa Adejobi, insisted that Makanjuola was culpable in the jungle justice.

He said, “Munirat was actually involved in the killing of the man. She has a case to answer and has been charged. She is in remand on the order of the court in our facility pending the outcome of her COVID-19 test. He will be moved to the correctional centre. So, the police have not detained her unlawfully.”

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